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A CHAUCER ITEM

In his review of my dissertation, Professor Moore expressed regret that I did not print the entry in which reference is made to Henry Gisors as Chaucer's deputy in the office of controller of the customs.¹ I have at last been able to verify my copy of this entry and give it herewith:

Rex dilectis et fidelibus suis Nicholao Brembre et Johanni Philippot collectoribus customarum et subsidiorum suorum in portu ciuitatis sue Londonie salutem. dilectus nobis Galfridus Chaucer Armiger contrarotulator customarum et subsidiorum nostrorum lanarum coriorum et pellium lanutarum in portu predicto nobis humiliter supplicauit vt cum ipse per certis negociis sit et per certum tempus futurum erit in tantum occupatus quod ipse circa officium suum contrarotulatoris quod in portu predicto habet intendere non potest absque inquietudine nimis graui: velimus ei licenciam concedere quod ipse officium predictum per quendam locum suum tenentem excercere et occupare possit: nos eius supplicacioni ex causa predicta fauorabiliter inclinati: licenciam huiusmodi ei usque ad festum omnium sanctorum proximum futurum duximus concedendam. Et ideo vobis mandamus quod dilectum nobis Henricum Gisors quem idem Galfridus locum suum tenentem in officio predicto coram nobis in cancellaria nostra deputauit cuius eciam sacramentum de officio illo bene et fideliter loco dicti Galfridi faciendo cepimus ad officium illud vice prefati Galfridi exequendum recipiatis et ipsum Henricum omnia que ad officium predictum in portu predicto pertinent vsque ad idem festum omnium sanctorum libere et absque impedimento aliquo facere et excercere permittatis. Ita semper quod idem Henricus in officio illo interim continue moretur et se bene et fideliter gerat in eodem et rotulos suos officium illud tangentes manu sua propria scribat. Volumus enim quod altera pars sigilli nostri quod dicitur Coket in portu predicto in custodia sua remaneat per tempus supradictum. Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium xxxiii die Junij

per breue de priuato sigillo.²

University of Chicago.

J. R. HULBERT.

BRIEF MENTION

Chaucers Sprache und Verskunst, dargestellt von Bernhard ten Brink. Dritte Auflage bearbeitet von Eduard Eckhardt (Leipzig, Chr. Herm. Tauchnitz, 1920). The first edition of this notable book appeared in 1884; the second, supervised (*durchgesehen*) by

¹ *Modern Language Notes*, xxviii, 193.

² *Close Rolls* 224. mem. 36.

Professor Kluge, in 1899, which was seven years after the author's death. This second edition was translated into English by Dr. M. Bentinek Smith in 1901 (Macmillan & Co.). The section-numbering is the same thruout these three forms of the work; this agreement is, unfortunately, not maintained in the newly revised edition. The English translator very helpfully supplemented the references to the Six-Text edition by references to Skeat's *Chaucer*, but this feature has also been disregarded by Dr. Eckhardt. However, there is a gain in the extension of the verbal index, which now embraces chapters I and II (not only II as heretofore). In tracing the redistribution of details, this extension supplies the right help. Thus, the interesting word *reysed* (*Prol.* 54), discussed by Zupitza in his review of the first edition, has been carried from § 41 to § 88, where it is more precisely derived from German thru O. F. *reise*, 'military expedition.'

In a brief preface, Dr. Eckhardt tells that he assumed the preparation of this edition at the solicitation of Professor Kluge; that the book was ready for publication in 1914, when the war intervened; and that the consequent delay has proved to be an advantage in bringing to his use the studies of Dr. Wild (*Wiener Beiträge zur engl. Philologie* 44, 1915, reviewed by Dr. Ekwall, *Beiblatt zur Anglia* 27, 164, 1916), and Dr. Bihl (*Anglistische Forschungen* 50, 1916). A bibliographical list is given of the principal aids in the editor's effort to cancel (*tilgen*) *das Veraltete und Verfehlt*, and additional references of value are incidently given in the text, as, for example, to F. Eilers (p. 18), to Luick (p. 10 note 3), and especially to the editor's own extensive and important article on "Die neuengl. Verkürzung langer Tonsilbenvokale" (*Engl. Stud.* 50, 1916-17). On the other hand no disadvantage has been incurred by references to unimportant or untrustworthy studies, such as Professor E. F. Shannon's examination of Chaucer's octosyllabic verse (*J. of Engl. and Germ. Phil.* xi, 277 ff., 1913).

Since this Grammar first appeared, some thirty-six years ago, there has been an accumulation of references to it in the Chaucerian studies of a notably fruitful period; and in its peculiar supremacy it will surely long continue to be unrivalled. As revising editor Dr. Eckhardt has encouraged prophecy. But why has he overlooked the practical advantage of keeping the section-numbering in agreement thru all the editions and consequently thruout books and articles relating to Chaucer? The confusion is particularly disturbing in the complicated matter of the first chapter. Here the first variation is occasioned by needlessly creating a new § 16 for matter that could have been differently placed. The new numbers are now in excess by one, until § 36 is passed. At this point the new numbers fall behind the old by two (*e. g.* § 37 equates with former § 39); then at § 43 this difference is reduced to one,

but is again increased to two when former § 97 is subordinated to become division *b* of § 95. All this shuffling of the section-numbers should have been avoided, even at the cost of an occasional infelicity in the distributon of the matter.

The report of what is most changed in this new edition may, with advantage, be cited in Dr. Eckhardt's own words: "Verfehlt sind vor allem ten Brinks Lehre von den schwebenden Vokalen, und seine zahlreichen Ableitungen aus dem Niederländischen und Niederdeutschen." One becomes aware at once, in §§ 3 and 6, how the first of these subjects has exercised the care and resourcefulness of the editor. A foot-note to § 3 is appropriately employed to announce the variation from the preceding editions; but one feels it to be inappropriate to refer to ten Brink in the third person (as on p. 10) within the text of his own book, and this is rendered doubly unsuitable by ten Brink's occasional expression in the first person, as in §§ 330, 331 (formerly 333, 334). The second category of changes has also required punctilious care. The method may be observed in comparing former § 218 with the revised § 215. Here the importation of *gere* from former § 210, note, and the citation of recent conjectures exemplify the editor's endeavor to bring the book up to date. At many points thruout the book new citations and references make this endeavor manifest. However, reverting to § 215, it would have been appropriate to record the troublesome *gere* of *Blaunche* 1257. This poem also calls to mind the omission, in all the editions of this Grammar, at § 195 (198) of the pp. *cude*, which occurs in lines 787 and 998 of *Blaunche* in a usage (now dialectal) for which the *NED.* (*s. v. can*) has no citation before Lydgate.

In § 4 the capability of stress shown by the second syllable of *worthy*, *singinge*, *frendshipe*, is still left in mystery: "sei es bloss dem Metrum zu liebe, sei es auf Grund einer tiefer wurzelnden Tendenz der Sprache." This is a challenge, and Dr. Eckhardt's investigation (*Engl. Stud.* 50) should have prepared him to accept it, and to rewrite the paragraphs relating to one of the most characteristic laws of English utterance, the law of accentuation that effects the change in the quantity of the vowel of the first member of substantive compounds, and in the radical syllable of derivatives. The grammarians have long been transmitting an erroneous interpretation of these changes. Of this Dr. Eckhardt is aware, and promises the required correction at the beginning of his article (*l. c.* p. 201): "Die meisten grammatiker erklären die verkürzung in *wisdom*, *husband*, *whitsuntide* und ähnlichen fallen aus der auf den tonsilbenvokal folgenden doppelkonsonanz. In *southern*, *national*, *twopence*, *holiday* usw. ist aber die verkürzung ebenfalls eingetreten, obgleich hier nur einfache konsonanz vorliegt. . . . Die doppelkonsonanz kann also als grund der verkürzung in *wisdom*, *husband*, *whitsuntide* nur in zweiter reihe in betracht kom-

men; deren eigentliche ursache muss eine andere sein, und zwar dieselbe wie in *southern, national, twopence, holiday*." To make this statement correct one must cancel 'nur in zweiter reihe'; but Dr. Eckhardt inconsistently does not permit that, as is shown in a later section (l. c. p. 276), where he attributes the short vowel of the first syllable of *wisdom* and *husband* solely to the 'doppelkonsonanz,' and accordingly allows this explanation to remain unchanged in § 6 β of the Grammar. This charge of inconsistency cannot be withdrawn, for Dr. Eckhardt is surely not to be sustained in restricting the effect of 'double consonants' to Middle English, and assuming other causes for the same effects in the subsequent periods of the language (l. c. p. 284).

The true explanation of this process of back-shortening, as Sweet calls it, lies in the recognition of the secondary accent on the second member of substantive compounds and on certain derivative syllables. This accent supplies the constant and adequately effective factor in the problem. At no period of rhythmic composition is this secondary accent without the effect of an inherent principle of the language; in prose-utterance the same is true, but less obvious to the unmethodical observer. The native categories of the secondary accent are clearly brought to view in Anglo-Saxon versification; and by following these categories thru the later periods of the language the demonstration of the announced proposition is made irrefutable by the revelation of that inherent law of English utterance which is the sufficient cause of back-shortening. This process set in apparently when the earlier accentuation of the language became less acute. The more grave accentuation favored an approximate levelling of the adjacent accents (primary and secondary) under a hovering or circumflex accent. The component parts of the word (with the two accents) were thus fused into a closer unity of utterance (the unity of the *Sprechtakt*) and shared in a redistribution of the accent of the word as a whole, with a consequent result of shortening or keeping short the vowels of the syllables which in mere parathesis would not have been changed.

To be concrete, the former statement assumes all historic secondary accents to be of equal or of adequate potency (under the prevailing fashion of grave accentuation) in effecting the discussed relation between the quantity of the vowels of simple words and the vowels of compounded and derived words. A few representative words, in Modern English form, will serve the purpose of the illustration: *wisdom, friendship, husband, nothing, body, worthy, cleansing, holiday*. The failure to recognize in the categories suggested the constant and adequate factor in back-shortening leads to the perpetuation of the inorganic divisions and classifications elaborated in § 6 of this Grammar. The inconsistencies to which this tradition leads may also be conveniently observed in Professor Emerson's distinction between the 'weak' final vowel of *body* and

the strong secondary stress of *redy, sory* (*A Middle English Reader*, §§ 73, 77). It is the frequent lengthening of the consonant following the shortened vowel that has given rise to the traditional error in this problem. A result has been mistaken for a cause. Deferring the argument in its details, it must serve the present purpose merely to add that the function assigned to the secondary word-accent in the process of back-shortening is to be inferred from the Chaucerian rhythms—not to look beyond Chaucer; and that this inference is to be strengthened by correcting at many minor points the scansion of lines in the division of this Grammar devoted to versification,—the division that Dr. Eckhardt has transmitted essentially without revision.

As a whole this Grammar has been brought into somewhat closer agreement with the present state of technical knowledge, and Dr. Eckhardt will be rewarded by the appreciative thanks of all serious students of Chaucer for what he has done to perpetuate the extraordinary usefulness of this book. An English version of this new edition is, however, not so much required as a newly planned Chaucerian Grammar, supplying a more complete systematization of what scholars have contributed to the subject since ten Brink's day.

J. W. B.

Writing Through Reading, by Robert M. Gay (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), is a frank recurrence to old-fashioned methods of teaching English composition—the method of Rufus Choate, translating the classics; of Franklin, reproducing the essays in his odd volume of *The Spectator*; of Stevenson, playing the sedulous ape to a succession of masters. The reproduction of another's thought is not offered as a complete substitute for original composition. From one-half to one-third of a student's practice in writing, Professor Gay suggests, may profitably be spent in the use of "forms of reproduction"; that is, translating, paraphrasing, condensing, imitating prose, and imitating verse. To each of these forms the author devotes a brief chapter, accompanied by happily chosen exercises.

The result is an exceedingly interesting book. Professor Gay's selections are made with such tact, and his comments are so readable that the method which he advocates enjoys in his hands all the advantage of an attractive presentation. This is fortunate, for it is a method which at its best demands in the student a teachable and a patient spirit. Professor Gay's book may not be well adapted to use in a freshman class of a thousand. Yet there are classes which can use it profitably. We have got so far from the study and practice of what our fathers called *belles lettres*, and have so devoted ourselves to the notion that English is merely a tool wherewith to do the business of life, that it is well for us to be recalled

to the earlier point of view. Imitation and emulation are, after all, the methods by which every artist must begin. In devising exercises for the use of these methods in English classes, Professor Gay has performed a useful service.

J. C. F.

Mairet's *Illustre Corsaire* (1641). There has recently come into my possession an edition of this tragi-comedy which I do not find mentioned in any bibliographical work. The first edition, Paris, Courbé, 1640, 4to., is the only one named by Maupoint, de Beauchamps, La Vallière, Nicéron and Soleinne. The frères Parfaict and Lérís give merely the supposed date of representation, 1637. Mouhy, with his usual inaccuracy, dates the first edition both 1637 (*Théâtre François*, I, 250) and 1640 (*ibid.*, II, 214). Bizos in his dissertation on Mairet refers only to an edition of 1642, published by Courbé and Jonas de Bréquigny.

The edition that has been overlooked is entitled "L'ILLVSTRE / CORSAIRE, / TRAGI-COMEDIE, / DE MAIRET, / *Sur l'Imprimé* / A PARIS / Chez AVGVSTIN COURBE', Imprimeur / & Libraire de Monseigneur Frere dn Rpy, [du Roy] / dans la petite Salle du Palais, à la Palme. / M. DC. XXXXI." It begins, like the first edition, with a dedicatory epistle, an *advertissement*, and a sonnet in honor of the duchesse d'Esguillon. It contains 104 pages. The dedicatory epistle and the verse throughout the volume are printed in italics. The type-page (measured, p. 75) is 12.70 by 6.80 centimeters. The size and the fact that the wire-marks are perpendicular show that it is a 32mo., though the signatures are those of a 4to.

In addition to slight changes of accentuation or spelling, *i* for *y*, *z* for *s*, etc., the following variants occur: "Que le simple entretien d'une esriture morte" (1640, p. 7) becomes "Que le silence entier d'une peinture morte" (1641, p. 16); "vos" (1640, p. 10, l. 4) becomes "nos" (1641, p. 18, l. 14); "augmentant" (1640, p. 47, l. 1), "augmente" (1641, p. 44, l. 18); "bientost" (1640, p. 51, l. 6), "tantost" (1641, p. 47, l. 14); "merveilles" (1640, p. 58, l. 2), "merveille" (1641, p. 52, l. 10); "ennemis" (1640, p. 66, l. 18), "ennuis" (1641, p. 59, l. 25); "et de l'un de l'autre" (1640, p. 83, l. 7), "et de l'un et de l'autre" (1641, p. 71, l. 4); "sujet" (1640, p. 100, l. 7), "besoin" (1641, p. 83, l. 7); the speech of Ismène (1640, p. 49, l. 9) is incorrectly assigned to Tenare (1641, p. 46, l. 11); that of Evandre (1640, p. 112, l. 1) to Erphore (1641, p. 91, l. 4). The change of "ennemis" to "ennuis" is required by the meter; the addition of "et" in the following case, by both meter and correct usage.

H. C. L.